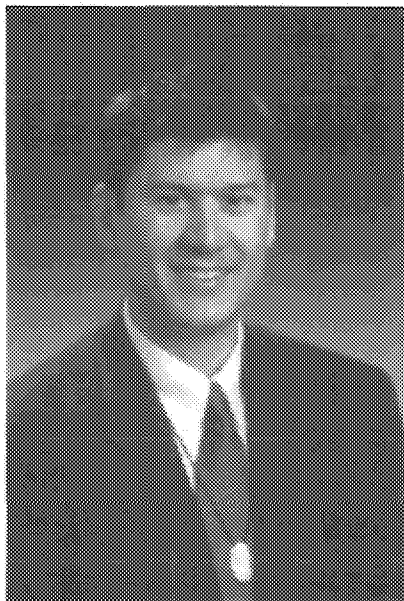


Bristol Bay headwaters no place for Pebble**COMPASS: Other points of view***(09/23/11 22:13:03)*

Bristol Bay Native Corp. is a billion-dollar economic engine with a 40-year history of responsible development. In 2007, more than two-thirds of BBNC shareholders opposed the proposed Pebble mine project -- a number assuredly on the rise. If that didn't make you think, nearly 85 percent of Bristol Bay residents and some 90 percent of Bristol Bay commercial fishermen also oppose the proposed large-scale, metallic sulfide mine.

Of course, responsible development is occurring around the state and needs to continue. Development supported by land owners and local user groups is necessary for the financial and social frameworks of Alaska. However, the proposed Pebble mine project does not have the support needed to move-forward.

As the noise around Pebble was building, BBNC was doing its homework. In December 2009, after engaging in years of study, shareholder meetings and information-gathering, BBNC formally opposed the project. Bristol Bay Natives have a voice and we are using it. This is not the squeaky wheel minority opinion but rather an expression of the vast majority of individuals and organizations who are the true stewards of the land, water and resources.

As an owner of 3 million acres of subsurface lands in Bristol Bay, BBNC is not opposed to appropriate development -- but we cannot support development "at any cost." The Pebble deposit is on state land and therefore BBNC does not have a decisive role to grant permits or collect royalties from production. Although the state claims to have a robust system for

permitting projects, the responsibility to pay for permitting lies with the developer. In other words, mine developers will pay the state to review and approve their own permits.

Massive development in this location would have effects throughout the Bristol Bay watershed, where tens of millions of sockeye come to spawn every year. Developers describe Pebble as "world-class." Bristol Bay salmon are not only "world-class" but are possibly the last and largest sustainable wild salmon fisheries left in the world. Thousands of residents depend on the fishery as the lifeblood of Bristol Bay, commercially and culturally.

Mine development of the magnitude that has been proposed cannot co-exist in an area where nearly every river and stream contains proven anadromous fish species. There will be failures, and there will be damage. A "no-net loss" policy means that a loss of fish would be monetized or replaced with equivalent hatchery-raised species. For the stewards of this land, this is environmentally and culturally unacceptable.

Development of non-renewable resources is and will remain a priority for Alaska and the nation. However, the right to conserve and respect sustainable resources that people have depended on for thousands of years is not condemnation. There are places where development can and should happen; the headwaters of the Bristol Bay watershed is not that place.

Cut through the noise. Listen to those who have made Bristol Bay their home and will be there long after the rest are gone.

Jason Metrokin is president/CEO of Bristol Bay Native Corp., an Alaska Native regional corporation. For more information, visit PebbleWatch.com or visit BBNC.net.